

Message Text

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72

ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-12 ADP-00 SS-14 H-02 EB-11 ACDA-19 TRSE-00

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WH - LJANKA

S/ PRS - PHARE

S/ S - MR. BARNES

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P 170002 Z MAR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 049655

E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: WHITE HOUSE COMMENT ON SENATE DEMOCRATIC
CONFERENCE PROPOSAL ON TROOP REDUCTIONS

1. RELEVANT EXCERPTS PRESS SECRETARY ZIEGLER' S MARCH 16
NEWS CONFERENCE FOLLOW.

" I WOULD LIKE TO AGAIN RESTATE THE POSITION OF THIS ADMINI-
STRATION, THAT WE AND OUR ALLIES ARE NOW ENGAGED WITH
COUNTRIES IN THE WARSAW PACT IN TALKS ON MUTUAL BALANCED
FORCE REDUCTIONS, AND IT WOULD MAKE NO SENSE AT ALL TO
REDUCE OUR FORCES AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS
THAT MAY LEAD TO A MORE STABLE BALANCE IN EUROPE.

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" THE PROPOSALS IN THIS RESOLUTION BY THE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE, WE FEEL, ARE UNWISE. A MAJORITY OF THE SENATE HAS SUPPORTED THE POSITION THAT UNILATERAL FORCE REDUCTIONS ARE NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY AS WE ARE PROCEEDING WITH THE MUTUAL BALANCED FORCE REDUCTION DISCUSSIONS WITH OUR ALLIES AND WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES.

" THE FORCES THAT WE MAINTAIN OVERSEAS ARE THERE IN SUPPORT OF OUR SECURITY COMMITMENTS AND INTERESTS. THE LEVEL AND COMPOSITION OF OUR FORCES AND THE BASIS TO SUPPORT THEM HAVE BEEN AND WILL BE ADJUSTED AS STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE, BUT ALWAYS AS A REFLECTION OF THOSE INTERESTS AND COMMITMENTS.

" THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE ITS FORCES IN EUROPE PROVIDED OUR ALLIES DO LIKEWISE, AND THAT UNILATERAL REDUCTION OF U. S. FORCES AT THIS POINT IS UNWISE AND THAT THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE PROPOSAL ARE UNWISE.

" Q: RON, ON THOSE TALKS, CAN YOU CONFIRM REPORTS OR RUMORS, REALLY, THAT WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE SOVIETS PULL BACK FOUR OF THEIR TROOPS FOR EVERY ONE OF OURS RETURNED HOME?

" MR. ZIEGLER: I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS OR RESPOND TO QUESTIONS SUCH AS THAT. I JUST WANTED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY THIS MORNING, BECAUSE THIS IS A PROPOSAL THAT WAS VOTED ON IN THE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE, TO RESTATE OUR POSITION, WHICH HAS BEEN A CONSISTENT POSITION, TO REDUCE OUR FORCES ARBITRARILY AND UNILATERALLY, REGARDLESS OF THE STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS INVOLVED, WOULD BE COMPLETELY IRRESPONSIBLE. ROGERS

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